

Calls Action Screen to Evade Congress

Part 7/28/64

Parking Lot for AF Swimming Pool As 'Essential for Defense' Irks GAO

By Stanley Meisler
Associated Press

There is a parking lot beside the officers swimming pool at Andrews Air Force Base, that is officially classified "essential and urgently required in the interest of national defense."

The General Accounting Office yesterday declared it isn't essential at all and the classification is no more than a screen used by the Air Force to build the pool parking lot without congressional approval.

The parking lot is one of a number cited by the GAO as it accused the Air Force of using funds to build projects without congressional approval. The examples reported by the congressional watchdog agency include a golf course, a riding stable, and a pet hospital.

The GAO demanded that

the air force discipline the individuals responsible for the method used to finance the projects.

Here are some of the assertions made by the GAO:

- In 1959 and 1960, the Air Force used \$272,000 of airport runway construction money to build a golf course, golf clubhouse and riding stables at Lockbourne Air Force Base, Ohio.

- During the 1961 fiscal year, the Air Force spent \$24,665 to convert a building into a food-inspection facility which it said was urgently needed. But the GAO said its investigation showed the converted building was not used as a food-inspection facility at all but as a veterinary hospital for sentry dogs and pets of men on the base.

- The Air Force awarded contracts for the installation of lawn sprinklers and an ad-

dition to the officers club at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., under the clause that permits spending of funds for urgent projects.

The GAO, commenting on the projects submitted as urgent, said they "were classified as urgently needed, to permit their construction without prior congressional approval, although it was apparent that the projects were so labeled not so much on the urgency of their need but on the likelihood that they would not be approved for accomplishment with military construction funds."

The Air Force, commenting on the GAO report, said "some of the problems disclosed by the audit report appear to have resulted primarily from unintended interpretations of directives and regulations in effect at the time the work was accomplished."